

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1146

By Fitzhugh

A RESOLUTION to honor Coach Pat Head Summitt and the 2008 NCAA Women's Basketball Champions, the Tennessee Lady Volunteers.

WHEREAS, in a brilliant display of athleticism and coaching, the University of Tennessee Lady Vols achieved one of the most difficult feats in all of athletics when they captured the 2008 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Women's Basketball Championship by soundly defeating Stanford, 64-48, and repeating as national champs in the process; and

WHEREAS, led by Coach Pat Summitt, the best coach in all of college basketball, the Lady Vols won their second consecutive national championship before a crowd of 21,655 in Tampa's St. Pete Times Forum on April 8, 2008, again reaching the pinnacle of women's college basketball and adding yet another chapter to the storied program's history; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Vols are the first team to win consecutive titles twice and the first to repeat as Champions since 2004; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee's stellar defense dominated the Cardinal from the outset with a smothering combination of full-court pressure and half-court traps, as the Lady Vols extinguished the previously hot Stanford offense, holding the Cardinal to a season low 48 points, 37 points below the team's tournament average of 85 points per game; forward Alberta Auguste, who stifled Stanford star and Wade Trophy Award winner Candice Wiggins, center Nicky Anosike, who contributed 6 steals and was named the game's Most Valuable Player, and Shannon Bobbitt, who harried the Cardinal into 14 turnovers, all were integral to the defensive onslaught; and

WHEREAS, with Stanford's offense throttled, the Lady Vols' offense emerged in the first seven minutes, shooting more than 60 percent from the field and jumping out to a 17-9 lead that was never relinquished; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee's All-American Candace Parker fought through the pain of a separated shoulder in tallying 17 points, 9 rebounds and 4 steals, while the rest of the team shouldered the load in leading the team to victory; Shannon Bobbitt was deadly from the three point range, striking early and often from long range in scoring 13 points; and Nicky Anosike netted 12 points and nabbed 8 rebounds as the Lady Vols avenged an early season loss to the Cardinal and solidified the team's status as the most preeminent basketball program in the history of women's collegiate athletics; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee's remarkable championship performance earned the team's players several individual accolades; Candace Parker, Shannon Bobbitt, and Nicky Anosike were deservedly named to the All-Tournament team, while Candace further distinguished herself as only the fourth player in history to win consecutive Most Outstanding Player of the Final Four Awards; and

WHEREAS, in the first round of NCAA Tournament action against Oral Roberts University, the Lady Vols pummeled the Golden Eagles, 94-55, with an offensive drive led by Angie Bjorklund, Candace Parker, and Alexis Hornbuckle; and

WHEREAS, facing Purdue University in the second round of tournament play, Tennessee responded to Coach Summitt's challenge to play harder with defensive effort, and held a battle-tested Purdue team scoreless for eight minutes in the first half enroute to a 78-52 thrashing of the Boilermakers; and

WHEREAS, the win against Purdue marked several important milestones for the Lady Vols: it earned Pat Summitt distinction as the first coach in Division I college basketball to win 100 tournament games, it ensured the Lady Vols' 27th consecutive Sweet 16 appearance, and it improved the team's first and second round tournament record to an astounding 42 wins against no losses; and

WHEREAS, in the Sweet 16 matchup against Notre Dame, the Lady Vols emerged victorious over the Fighting Irish, 74-64, led by the Herculean efforts of Candace Parker, who netted 34 points and nabbed 13 rebounds while igniting the Vols' offense to overcome a 37-33 deficit early in the second half; and

WHEREAS, in the Elite 8 game, the Lady Vols bested the Texas A&M Aggies, 53-45, to earn a berth in the Final Four; in an impressive display of resolute spirit and indomitable character, Candace Parker played her usual brilliant game despite having a dislocated left shoulder and led the Tennessee offense with 26 points, while Alexis Hornbuckle contributed fourteen points in the hard-fought game. Both these talented athletes earned recognition as members of the All-Region Tournament Team, with Candace earning the Most Outstanding Player Award; and

WHEREAS, appearing in the Final Four semifinal round for the sixth time in the past seven seasons, the Lady Vols beat Southeastern Conference rival LSU in a defensive struggle, edging the Tigers 47-46, to advance to the national title game; with seven seconds left on the clock and her team down by one point, Candace Parker drove the length of the court and executed a perfect pass that resulted in Alexis Hornbuckle scoring the winning bucket with only .7 seconds left on the clock; and

WHEREAS, in the title game against Stanford, Coach Summitt and the Lady Vols cruised to victory as Stanford Coach Tara VanDeveer and the Cardinal had no answer for Tennessee's relentless defense and aggressive board play; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Vols' aggressive, attacking game, marked by both speed and athleticism, has continued to set the standard for women's basketball; the team completed the 2007-2008 season with an enviable 36-2 record; and

WHEREAS, in winning a second National Championship and Most Outstanding Player Award, Candace Parker firmly established herself as the most versatile player the women's college game has ever seen; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Lady Vols 2007-2008 championship team are Nicky Anosike, Alberta Auguste, Vicki Baugh, Angie Bjorklund, Shannon Bobbitt, Kelley Cain, Alex Fuller, Alexis Hornbuckle, Cait McMahan, Candace Parker, and Sydney Smallbone; and

WHEREAS, Pat Summitt has amassed a remarkable 983-182 record in 34 years as Coach of the Lady Vols; she has the highest winning percentage in NCAA tournament history at 104-19 (.846), and owns the marks for most tournament wins, most games coached, and most tournament appearances (27); she has more Women's Final Four wins (21), Final Four

appearances (18), and NCAA titles (8) than any other women's coach in history; simply stated, she is the greatest college basketball coach in the history of the game; and

WHEREAS, in addition to her coaching honors and accolades, Pat is equally proud of the success her players have achieved in the classroom during her illustrious tenure on "The Hill"; she has a 100 percent graduation rate for all players who have finished their careers at UT, and recently the program was recognized as leading twelve women's teams in the 2008 NCAA tournament with perfect graduation rates during a four-year period; and

WHEREAS, as testament to Coach Summitt's commitment to academic excellence, Candace Parker was recently named to the 2008 ESPN The Magazine Academic All-America Women's Basketball First Team, as selected by the College Sports Information Directors of America, while Nicky Anosike earned Second Team honors; and

WHEREAS, Coach Summitt is particularly grateful for the support of her incredible staff, including Associate Head Coach Holly Warlick, Assistant Coaches Nikki Caldwell and Dean Lockwood, Video Coordinator Betsy McAllister, Graduate Assistant Elizabeth Curry, and a host of team managers, all of whom have played a significant role in molding this team into championship form; and

WHEREAS, others who are deserving of this body's commendation for their unrelenting support of Coach Summit and the Lady Vols include the UT Women's Athletic Director Joan Cronan; Assistant Athletics Director for Basketball Operations Danielle Donehew; Associate Athletics Director for Media Relations Debby Jennings and her staff, Director for Sports Medicine Jenny Moshak and her assistants; and everyone else affiliated with the Women's Athletics Administration and the Lady Vol Basketball support staff; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly and Big Orange Faithful everywhere take great pride in honoring this extraordinary group of young women who have contributed immeasurably to the extraordinary legacy of University of Tennessee Women's Basketball; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate Coach Pat Head Summitt and the University of

Tennessee Lady Volunteers upon winning the 2008 NCAA Women's Basketball Championship and extend to them our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation to each of the above-named persons with this final clause omitted from such copies.